



City of Somerville

URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION

City Hall 3rd Floor, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville MA 02143

FEBRUARY 1, 2022 MEETING MINUTES

This meeting was conducted via remote participation on GoToWebinar.

NAME	TITLE	STATUS
Sarah Lewis	Co-Chair	<i>Present</i>
Luisa Oliveira	Co-Chair	<i>Absent</i>
Frank Valdes	Member	<i>Present</i>
Deborah Fennick	Member	<i>Present</i>
Andrew Arbaugh	Member	<i>Present</i>
Tim Talun	Member	<i>Present</i>
Tim Houde	Member	<i>Present</i>

City staff present: Andrew Graminski (Planning & Zoning)

The meeting was called to order at 6:06pm and adjourned at 8:05pm.

PUBLIC MEETING: 10 Washington Street (P&Z 21-134)

(continued from 23 November 2021)

The applicant team presented the updated building design with façade option 2. They included an articulated building entrance to be unique compared to the rest of the façade, which was moved to the Washington Street façade. The team presented a mock-up of a potential sculpture on the corner of Washington Street and Inner Belt Road that they envision a local artist would be commissioned to create. They also shared their updated landscape plan, including plans for a green roof.

The Commission and applicant team discussed the landscape plan and the possibility of adding more street trees, the extension of Roland Street, and the penthouse materiality and if there is a plan for lighting. They spoke about some design elements such as the relationship of the cornice to the glass wall, wooden bench placement, how false windows on the Northern façade takes away from the authenticity of the building, and the possibility of relocating the lobby entry to Crescent Street. Co-Chair Lewis stated that a lobby entrance off of Crescent Street, which is a parking lot, does not comply with the Zoning Ordinance.

Following a motion by Member Valdes, seconded by Member Fennick, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0), with Member House abstaining, to recommend that the lobby entry be relocated to be perpendicular to Washington Street and be facing Crescent Street, if possible.

Following a motion by Member Talun, seconded by Member Valdes, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0), with Member Houde abstaining, to recommend that further guidance be incorporated into the design.

Additional design guidance:

- Add streetscape along Roland Street, even if it is designated as an alley, to complement streetscape for adjacent building.
- Preference for integrating a higher level of native species with overall planting palate.
- Match cornice with brick at top of building.
- False windows need further development on the Crescent Street façade.
- Dark material screen for penthouse screen.
- Bench relocation.

Following a motion by Member Talun, seconded by Member Valdes, the Commission voted unanimously (4-0), with Member Houde abstaining, to recommend that the design guidelines for the CI district have been met.

RESULT:

RECOMMENDED

PUBLIC MEETING: 2-4 Alpine Street (P&Z 21-119)

(continued from 11 January 2022)

The applicant team presented an updated building design scheme with façade option 2. They have moved the trash and recycling area to another location, located planters to be in line with the fenestration for the residential units, reorganized the commercial space with open-concept windows and a new entry, added street trees along Alpine Street, and added bike racks that run parallel with the curb along Alpine Street.

The Commission and applicant team discussed the unacceptable bike parking solution, how minimum setbacks are not ideal for this location, how this building should have outdoor seating to create a great urban amenity for the City considering the location along the community path, and how the design needs to embrace the community path especially with the commercial space. They also spoke how the cornice band needs further development and the location and access of the transformer.

Following a motion by Member Talun, seconded by Member Arbaugh, the Commission voted unanimously (5-0) to continue the design review to a future meeting.

RESULT:

CONTINUED

PUBLIC MEETING: 7 Washington (P&Z 21-147)

The applicant team walked the Commission through the site plan, proposed façade designs, and landscape plan.

The Commission and applicant team discussed the materiality palate, how the team expects to achieve their net-zero sustainability goals, the orientation of the building relative to Washington Street, the location of the bicycle parking and how it should be accessible on the ground floor, and the location of the entry. The Commission agreed that their preferred design is option 1; they felt it was elegant, simple, and successful. They Commission would like to understand the materiality of the building better and asked the applicant team for a single page explanation on the material palate for the next meeting. The Commission and applicant team then discussed the landscape plan, how the terrace area should be stacked closer to help create more usable space, and how the entrance design is very successful. Co-Chair Lewis noted that this project will likely require a transformer and highly recommended that the team start the conversation with the relevant parties as soon as possible. She also noted that the Commission would like the landscape architect to attend the next meeting.

Following a motion by Member Valdes, seconded by Member Fennick, the Commission voted unanimously (5-0) to recommend façade design option 1.

Following a motion by Member Valdes, seconded by Member Fennick, the Commission voted unanimously (5-0) to continue the design review to a future meeting.

RESULT:

CONTINUED

NOTICE: These minutes constitute a summary of the votes and key discussions at this meeting. To review a full recording, please contact the Planning, Preservation & Zoning Division at planning@somervillema.gov.